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STATE OF MONTANA

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Department of Public Health

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MONTANA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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HELENA, MONTANA

Published Monthly at Helena, by the State Board of Health.

"Sanitary Regulation Will Prevent More Crime Than Law."



THE HEALTH OFFICER TO DETERMINE NATURE OF
DISEASE IN CASES OF DOUBT.

Opinion From the Attorney General.

Helena, Montana, May 16, 1911.

Dr. T. D. Tuttle, Sec'y.,
State Board of Health,
Helena, Montana.

Dear Sir: I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th inst., in which you submit for my opinion the following question:

"When a physician is in doubt with regard to whether a patient under his care is suffering from a communicable disease, has he the authority to call on a Health Officer to see the patient as a Health Officer and determine the nature of the disease, or is the Health Officer entitled to charge the individual in such cases as though called in consultation?"

In my opinion whatever action the Health Officer takes at the invitation or solicitation of the physician in charge of any given case is taken by such Health Officer officialy and in no case except where such Health Officer may be called in consultation at the request of the individual could such Health Officer charge the individual for his services. The right to collect fees as between the physican and patient is purely a matter of private contract and must be entered into as a private contract, so that it is my opinion, that it being the duty of a Health Officer to investigate the existence of contagious disease within his district, that in making a visit as such Health Officer he cannot charge the patient therefor, a fee as for such consultation. His compensation prescribed by law covers all such service.

Yours very truly,

ALBERT J. GALEN,
Attorney General.

WHAT SHALL THE HARVEST BE.

During 1909 there was 665 cases of Typhoid Fever reported to the State Board of Health. Of this number 123 died showing a mortality of 18.7 per cent. During 1910 there was 768 cases reported of which 95 died showing a mortality of 12.3 per cent.

How many cases will be reported in 1911 and how many of them will die? This question cannot be answered in figures, but the answer will depend upon the people of this great state. If it is your will that this suffering and death be discontinued it is entirely within your power to prevent it. "Where there is a will there is a way," and the way by which Typhoid Fever may be prevented is a well known and well demonstrated road.

Whether the number of cases of Typhoid Fever in 1911 will equal or exceed those of 1910 depends on you, Mr. Physician. If you make tentative diagnoses of the cases you are called to treat, and do not instruct the members of the family, the nurse, and others in the method by which this disease can be prevented, the proper method of disposal of excreta of the patient, both during illness and convalescence; and if you fail to instruct the members of the household of the means by which contact communication may be prevented, you will not only fail to help diminish the number of cases of this disease, but will actually aid in increasing the frequency with which it will appear.

Whether Typhoid Fever will be more prevalent this year than last year in our State will depend upon you, Mr. Health Officer. If you simply receive the reports of cases filed with you and go thru the formality of entering them in your books and make no effort to find the source of infection, or to see that proper methods of preventing this disease are carried out, you will have failed to perform your duty as man and as health officer. Some health officers are mere figure heads. The health officer who receives a report on a case of Typhoid Fever, or any other communicable disease, and fails to make an earnest and conscientious effort to find the source of disease, is to all practical purposes a mere figure head. The earnest, conscientious health officer is an important factor in a community, but the sluggard is in reality a detriment to public health, because people look to him for protection from communicable diseases and he fails to perform his duty.

Investigation into sources of infection in cases of Typhoid Fever is more important than the investigation into the source of a case of smallpox. If you, as health officer, actually perform your duties within your district you can prevent certainly a large percentage of the cases of Typhoid Fever, but you cannot prevent a single case by sitting in your office and waiting for reports from attending physician. When a physician reports a case to you it is your duty to locate the source of infection and see that it is eradicated and that no new sources of infection result from the case reported to you.

The matter of preventing Typhoid Fever does not rest alone with the physician and health officer. The county commissioners of our various counties together with the health officer constitute our county boards of health; and two citizens in addition to a physician constitutes our city boards of health. These boards of health have a duty to perform and grave responsibilities are placed upon them when they become members of the respective boards of health. The health officer is under their direct supervision and they should council with and advise him in his efforts to prevent the spread of disease. They should support him in every effort that he makes to eradicate the source of any disease that may appear or threaten to appear within his jurisdiction; but the duties of members of boards of health do not end here. It is not merely their duty to support the health officer in the performance of his duties, but it is their duty to see that the health officer does perform his duty. A man who accepts the position as member of a board of health merely to fill out the number of members required, is a poor citizen to say the least. If he is not sufficiently interested in the protection of public health to attend meetings of his board, and to see that the health officer performs his duty, then that man should refuse to accept such a position of responsibility. If the board of health were permitted or required to expend large sums of money, or to supervise the expenditure of such large sums of money, and to see that it was not wasted, the members would neglect social and business engagements to be present at various meetings of the board. But it seems that health and life are not valued sufficiently high to justify missing an engagement to visit a ten cent show in order to supervise the work of preventing disease and death. If you who read this

happen to be a member of a board of health, I trust you will take it as directed at you personally, and if you are not performing your duty as a member of your board of health, then resign and let somebody who will take active interest in this work have your place.

There is in every city and town in our state an individual who can do much toward the eradication of disease in his respective town. I refer to our honorable Mayors. The personnel of every local board of health is in the hands of this honorable gentleman. We find our mayors taking active interest in the paving of our streets, in creating improvement districts in order that our sidewalks may be properly constructed and beautiful parking secured. We find them urging the installation of water and sewer systems, often without the least regard as to whether the water comes from a pure source, or the sewage flows directly into the source of water supply. Of what use is beautiful parking in the town to the man who is planted on the hill six feet under ground? Of what benefit is a beautiful driveway to the man or woman who can make use of the same only in the delirium of a burning fever? What compensation is there in a water system for the mother whose child has died as a result of impure milk, the sale of which is permitted by your lax ordinances? And where, on the whole, is the beauty of parking when through the branches of the trees we observe manure piles, open water closets, piles of filthy tin cans and rubbish which are permitted to accumulate in the back yards and alleys. All these things are sources of disease, and until our mayors realize that a healthy community is a more beautiful thing than are parked streets we must anticipate the appointment of indifferent boards of health, and we must continue to expect that health officers will be appointed according to the cheapness with which they will offer to do the work, and without regard to capacity or fitness to fill the office.

Finally, the prevalence of Typhoid Fever in our State will depend on the efforts of the individual citizen more than on the efforts of the physicians, health officers, boards of health or mayors of our cities. No matter how hard the health officer may work to prevent the spread of disease; no matter how earnestly the members of boards of health, mayors and physicians of our State may endeavor to secure sanitary surroundings, if the individual will not help these officers and others

working to improve the sanitary conditions of our State, but little good will result from their work.

The Fly is known to be one of the most common carriers of disease. The health officer cannot put fly screens on your windows for you, but he can only urge that you keep the flies out. Dirty, unsanitary conditions, manure piles, garbage cans, and other accumulations of organic matter furnish hatching places for flies, and open toilets furnish sources of infection for the flies to carry away.

Mr. Citizen, is YOUR back yard clean, or are you maintaining a fly hatchery for the benefit of your family and neighbors? Please note that I do not ask if your neighbor's back yard is clean, but if Your back yard is clean. If it is, then it is time for you to raise the question of seeing that your neighbor's back yard is made clean. On investigating complaints made by individuals relative to unsanitary conditions existing on the premises of their neighbors, health officers find in ninety per cent of complaints the premises of the person making complaint is actually in worse condition than are the premises complained of. Therefore, I say, is YOUR back yard clean, and is the alley adjacent to your back yard clean, and in a sanitary condition? Is there an open toilet on your premises? If so, is it clean, and what relation does it occupy to your well?

The Line of Battle Against Typhoid Fever Is: Boil the water; wash your hands; see that the fly screens in your house are secure; clean up your back yard; clean up your alley. Then begin and do it all over again and keep this up the year round and Typhoid Fever will be abolished.

Have you ordered those window screens yet? If not, do it NOW.

THE GARBAGE CAN.

The garbage can is not an inviting spectacle at best, but it can be made a reasonably clean object. Minneapolis has taken the lead in this matter. There every particle of waste from the kitchen, and this means all organic matter, is required to be drained and then wrapped in paper before it is placed in the garbage can. This not only prevents flies from coming in contact with material in the garbage can but prevents the can

itself from becoming soiled. However, it is really unnecessary to place any organic matter in the garbage can at all. When refuse from the kitchen is drained sufficiently free from water to enable one to wrap it in paper this material will promptly burn when placed in the fire; thus will a source of filth be eliminated and the fuel bill reduced for this organic matter furnishes no small amount of heat when burned.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES REPORTED FOR THE MONTH OF MAY, 1911.

SMALLPOX—Cases of Smallpox were reported as follows: Beaverhead, 1; Great Falls, 1; Chouteau, 1; Dawson, 1; Flathead (Excl. of Kalispell), 1; Kalispell, 6; Gallatin (Excl. of Bozeman), 1; Jefferson, 2; Helena, 1; Missoula City, 1; Musselshell, 1; Powell, 2; Butte, 3; Sweet Grass, 2; Teton, 5; Valley, 3. Total, 32. Total last Month 32.

DIPHTHERIA—Cascade (Excl. of Great Falls), 5; Chouteau, 6; Custer, 1; Anaconda, 3; Helena, 1; Missoula Co. (Excl. of Missoula city), 1; Missoula City, 1; Musselshell, 1; Park (Excl. of Livingston), 1; Butte, 3; Valley, 1. Total, 24. Total last month, 14.

SCARLET FEVER—Beaverhead, 1; Great Falls, 5; Custer, 1; Fergus, 5; Flathead (Excl. of Kalispell), 2; Gallatin (Excl. of Bozeman), 1; Bozeman, 5; Helena, 3; Lincoln, 3; Missoula county (Excl. of Missoula city), 2; Missoula city, 1; Livingston, 4; Silver Bow county (Excl. of Butte), 3; Butte, 5; Sweet Grass, 1; Teton, 1; Billings, 3. Total, 46. Total last month 88.

TYPHOID FEVER—Carbon, 1; Dawson, 3; Flathead (Excl. of Kalispell), 1; Jefferson, 3; Lewis and Clark (Excl. of Helena), 1; Helena, 2; Missoula, 1; Musselshell, 1; Park Co. (Excl. of Livingston), 1; Teton, 2; Billings, 1. Total, 17. Total last month, 14.

MEASLES—Beaverhead, 1; Carbon, 10; Cascade (Excl. of Great Falls), 1; Chouteau, 5; Custer, 1; Dawson, 1; Anaconda, 1; Fergus, 20; Flathead (Excl. of Kalispell), 43; Kalispell, 6; Gallatin (Excl. of Bozeman), 9; Bozeman, 108; Granite, 4; Jefferson, 3; Lewis and Clark (Excl. of Helena), 7; Lincoln, 1; Madison, 10; Meagher, 1; Park (Excl. of Livingston), 7; Livingston, 17; Meagher, 1; Butte, 6; Sweet Grass, 1; Teton, 3; Valley, 3; Yellowstone (Excl. of Billings), 2; Billings, 3. Total, 275. Total last month 611.

**Births Reported to the State Board of Health for the Month of May, 1911, and
Comparative Birth and Death Rate in the State.**

	Males	Females	Totals	Deaths	Excess of births	Excess of deaths
Beaverhead	5	6	11	9	2	.....
Broadwater	3	2	5	3	2	.....
Carbon	21	15	36	10	26	.....
Cascade (Excl. of).....	11	4	15	3	12	.....
Great Falls	13	18	31	10	21	.....
Chouteau	7	17	24	12	12	.....
Custer	10	17	27	8	19	.....
Dawson	22	19	41	5	36	.....
Deer Lodge (Excl. of).....	1	..	1	7	..	6
Anaconda	9	10	19	15	4	.....
Fergus	12	7	19	12	7	.....
Flathead (Excl. of).....	13	14	27	12	15	.....
Kalispell	12	3	15	3	12	.....
Gallatin (Excl. of).....	4	3	7	5	2	.....
Bozeman	7	3	10	4	6	.....
Granite	3	4	7	4	3	.....
Jefferson	3	7	10	2	8	.....
Lewis and Clark (Excl. of).....	..	..	..	7	..	7
Helena	24	10	34	22	12	.....
Lincoln	2	..	2	5	..	3
Madison	4	6	10	10	..	.....
Meagher	7	4	11	9	6	.....
Missoula Excl. of	5	3	8	9	..	1
Missoula City	7	17	24	7	17	.....
Musselshell	6	4	10	6	4	.....
Park (Excl. of)	2	4	6	5	1	.....
Livingston	4	9	13	4	9	.....
Powell	5	..	5	1	4	.....
Ravalli	6	10	16	9	7	.....
Rosebud	3	..	3	3	..	.....
Sanders	5	..	5	1	4	.....
Silver Bow (Excl. of).....	6	8	14	14	..	.....
Butte	50	41	91	57	34	.....
Sweet Grass	2	1	3	..	3	.....
Teton	12	7	19	8	11	.....
Valley	7	10	17	4	13	.....
Yellowstone (Excl. of).....	13	11	24	3	21	.....
Billings	13	12	25	11	14	.....
Totals	339	306	645	316	329	.....

**Deaths (Exclusive of Stillbirths) reported to the State Board of Health for the
Month of May, 1911.—Arranged According to Counties and Cities.**

	Totals	All Other Causes	Alcoholism	Suicide	Violence	Acute Intestinal Diseases	Malignant Tumors	Organic Heart Disease	Nephritis	Pneumonia	Whooping Cough	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Tuberculosis	Small Pox	Spotted Fever
Beaverhead	9	5	1	1	1					1							
Broadwater	3			1													
Carbon	10	4								2					1		
Cascade (Excl. of)	3	1		1							1						
Great Falls	10	6		1						1							
Chouteau	12	4		1		2				2				1	1		
Custer	8	2			2				1	1							
Dawson	5	3		1						1							
Deer Lodge (Excl. of)	7																
Anaconda	15	8								2							
Fergus	12	5		2					1	1			1				
Flathead (Excl. of)	12	3		2					1								
Kalispell	3	1					1										
Gallatin (Excl. of)	5	1		1					2								
Bozeman	4	2		1				1									
Granite	4	2											1				
Jefferson	2						1							1			
Lewis and Clark (Excl. of) ..	7	1															
Helena	22	6				2	3	1		3			1		3		
Lincoln	5			3													
Madison	10	3						2		2							
Meagher	5	3							1								
Missoula (Excl. of)	9	2		2					2				1				
Missoula City	7	3							1								
Musselshell	6	1		3													
Park (Excl. of)	4																
Livingston	5	3								1							
Powell	1																
Ravalli	9	2		1						1							
Rosebud	3	1															
Sanders	1																
Silver Bow (Excl. of)	14	3		1			1		3						4		
Butte	57	21		4		7	1		2	8	1	1	1		8		
Sweet Grass	8																
Teton	4			1						3							
Valley	4	1		1						1							
Yellowstone (Excl. of)	3																
Billings	11	6		1					1						1		
Totals	316	116	3	12	138	10	33	14	34	4	8	6	2	1	28	4	4

Population—375,000.

Monthly death rate per 1,000—.843.

Annual Death rate per 1,000—10.11.

